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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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THE following letter is of ſo intereſting a nature, that I have put my printer to no ſmall inconvenience in getting it ready at a very ſhort warning for this day's publication. If the contents of it are genuine, I hardly know of a puniſhment, which the author of ſuch complicated ruin does not deſerve. The unavoidable miſeries of mankind are ſufficient in themſelves for human nature to bear; but when ſhame and diſhonour are added to poverty and want, the lot of life is only to be endured by the conſideration that there is a final ſtate of retribution, in which the ſufferings of the innocent will be abundantly recompenced, and temporary ſorrows be crowned with endleſs joys.

To

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

SIR,

IF your breaſt has any feeling for the diſtreſſes of a ruined wife and mother, I beſeech you to give my moſt unhappy ſtory a place in your next paper. It may poſſibly come time enough to prevent a cataſtrophe, which would add horror to ruin, and drive to utter diſtraction a poor helpleſs family, who have more miſery already than they are able to bear.

I AM the wife of a very worthy officer in the army, who by a train of unavoidable misfortunes, was obliged to ſell his commiſſion; and from a ſtate of eaſe and plenty, has been long ſince reduced to the utmoſt penury and want. One ſon and a daughter were our only children——Alas! that I ſhould live to ſay it! happy would it have been for us, if one of them had never been born!——The boy was of a noble nature, and in happier times his father bought him a commiſſion in the ſervice, where he is now a lieutenant, and quartered in Scotland with his regiment. O! he is a dear and dutiful child, and has kept his poor parents from the extremity of want, by the kind ſupplies which he has from time to time ſent us in our misfortunes.

HIS ſiſter was in the eyes of a fond father and mother lovely to an extreme. Alas, Mr. Fitz-Adam! ſhe was too lovely——The times I have watered her dear face with my tears, at the thought that her temper was too meek and gentle for ſo engaging a form! She lived with us till ſhe was turned of fourteen, at which time we were prevailed on by a friend to place her with a gentleman of fortune in the country (who had lately buried his lady) to be the companion of his daughters.

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The gentleman's character was too honourable, and the offer too advantageous to ſuffer us to heſitate long about parting with a child, whom, dear to us as ſhe was, we were not able to ſupport. It is now a little more than two years ſince our ſeparation; and till within a very few months, it was our happineſs and joy that we had provided for her ſo fortunately. She lived in the eſteem and friendſhip of the young ladies, who were indeed very amiable perſons; and ſuch was their father's ſeeming indulgence to us, that he advanced my huſband a ſum of money upon his bond, to free him from ſome ſmall debts, which threatened him hourly with a jail.

But how ſhall I tell you, ſir, that this ſeeming benefactor has been the cruelleſt of all enemies! The enjoyment of our good fortune began to be interrupted, by hearing leſs frequently from our daughter than we uſed to do; and when a letter from her arrived, it was ſhort and conſtrained, and ſometimes blotted, as if with tears, while it told us of nothing that ſhould occaſion any concern. It is now upwards of two months ſince we have heard from her at all; and while we were wondring at her ſilence, we received a letter from the eldeſt of the young ladies, which threw us into a perplexity, which can neither be deſcribed nor imagined. It was directed to me, and contained theſe words.

" Madam,

" For reaſons that you will too ſoon be acquainted " with, I muſt deſire that your daughter may be a ſtran- " ger to our family. I dare not indulge my pity for " her as I would, leſt it ſhould lead me to think too " hardly of one, whom I am bound in duty to reverence " and honour. The bearer brings you a trifle, with " which I deſire you will immediately hire a poſt-chaiſe,

" and

" and take away your daughter. My father is from " home, and knows nothing of this letter; but aſſure " yourſelf it is meant to ſerve you, and that I am,

" MADAM,

" *Your very ſincere friend*

" *and humble ſervant.*

ALARMED and terrified as I was at this letter, I made no heſitation of complying with it's contents. The bearer of it either could not, or would not inform me of a ſyllable that I wanted to know. My huſband indeed had a fatal gueſs at it's meaning; and in a fury of rage, inſiſted on accompanying me: but as I really hoped better things, and flattered myſelf that the young ladies were apprehenſive of a marriage between their father and my girl, I ſoothed him into patience, and ſat out alone.

I TRAVELLED all night; and early the next morning, ſaw myſelf at the end of my journey—O, ſir! am I alive to tell it? I found my daughter in a ſituation the moſt ſhocking that a fond mother could behold! She had been ſeduced by her benefactor, and was viſibly with child. I will not detain you with the ſwoonings and confuſion of the unhappy creature at this meeting, nor with my own diſtraction at what I ſaw and heard. In ſhort, I learnt from the eldeſt of the ladies, that ſhe had long ſuſpected ſome unwarrantable intimacies between her father and my girl; and that finding in her altered ſhape and appearance a confirmation of her ſuſpicions, ſhe had queſtioned her ſeverely upon the ſubject, and brought her to a full confeſſion of her guilt: that farther, her infatuated father was then gone to town, to provide lodgings

lodgings for the approaching neceſſity, and that my poor deluded girl had conſented to live with him afterwards in London, in the character of a miſtreſs.

I NEED not tell you, ſir, the horror I felt at this diſmal tale. Let it ſuffice that I returned with my unhappy child, with all the haſte I was able. Nor is it needful that I ſhould tell you of the rage and indignation of a fond and diſtracted father at our coming home. Unhappily for us all, he was too violent in his menaces, which I ſuppoſe reached the ears of this cruelleſt of men, who eight days ago cauſed him to be arreſted upon his bond, and hurried to a priſon.

BUT if this, Mr. Fitz-Adam, had been the utmoſt of my miſery, cruel as it is, I had ſpared you the trouble of this relation, and buried my griefs in my own boſom. Alas! ſir, I have another concern, that is more inſupportable to me than all I have told you. My diſtracted huſband, in the anguiſh of his ſoul, has written to my ſon, and given him the moſt aggravated detail of his daughter's ſhame, and his own impriſonment; conjuring him (as he has confeſſed to me this morning) by the honour of a ſoldier, and by every thing he holds dear, to loſe not a moment in doing juſtice with his ſword upon this deſtroyer of his family. The fatal letter was ſent laſt week, and has left me in the utmoſt horror at the thought of what may happen. I dread every thing from the raſhneſs and impetuoſity of my ſon, whoſe notions of honour and juſtice are thoſe of a young ſoldier, who in defiance of the law, will be judge in his own cauſe, and the avenger of injuries, which Heaven only ſhould puniſh.

I HAVE written to him upon this occaſion in all the agony of a fond mother's diſtreſſes. But O! I have fatal forebodings